

Burra is a short drive from Adelaide, hence most Rally participants arrived and were settled in at the Burra Caravan Park by early afternoon on the 14th, Tuesday.

As the vans got settled, folks wandered around catching up on news.

The park is a relatively small one, capable of handling around 30 vans at powered sites, and a few more at unpowered sites. There is also an area for campers.

The Burra Creek adjoins the park and is almost like a small lake, complete with plenty of ducks which greeted us at the fence every morning, quacking for bread and treats.

The ablution block was spotlessly clean and sited pretty much in the guts of the park. The camp kitchen (Happy Hour site) was just as neat and tidy.

Interestingly, the area surrounding the camp kitchen and ablution block was beautiful lush grass which was constantly – I mean CONSTANTLY – watered by sprinklers.

This occurs because there is an aquifer there with bubbling spring water (to which the sprinklers were attached). An aquifer consists of porous rock that is saturated by ground water, which ultimately bubbles up through springs.

The weather was once again perfect, clear skies, warm days and cold nights.

Happy Hour kicked off as usual at 4 with everyone present. President Barbara (ha!) warmly welcomed all – even the Port Adelaide supporters – and within a short time you would not have believed that the get together followed a long break.

The evening meal was a barbecue and thanks to David and Ruth for bringing their Baby Q to the feast, to make cooking impossibly easy.

As far as first days go, it was a treat. Barb reminded everyone that the next day was a “freebie”, where you could do your own thing. Most agreed they wanted to explore the town, and mine histories. There is so much fascinating information about copper mining in Burra that it is not possible to cover it all here.

But we continuously marvelled at the stone work in the old mine buildings and works.

Ground water caused big problems for the operation of the mines and finally the mine was converted to open pit. Today that massive area is filled with water to a depth of around 50 metres and State agencies use it for diving instruction and practising water rescue operations.

The weather on Wednesday the 15th was every bit as beautiful as the previous day. Daytime maximum around 20 degrees and overnight about 6 or 7 degrees. Not a cloud in the sky.

Perhaps we can spare a thought for the children who worked in the mines. Many lost their lives and all were exposed to illnesses and under-nourishment. This summary from The Advertiser touches on the heart-ache families would have experienced:

In mid 1846 an inquest was held into the death of nine-year-old Richard Thomas Burn. The child was buried in a shaft after he was sent into the mine with some candles for his father and was on his way home when he was found by his father buried beneath several feet of earth and was “quite dead”. The inquest jury found the death was quite accidental but that the shoring of the chambers in the mines was insecure.

Happy Hour lived up to its name again with everyone back into the swing of teasing mates and gabbing.

We all went to the Burra Hotel, just a short stroll or drive from the park. All agreed the meals were as good as we had enjoyed – with an extensive menu and very reasonably priced. The place was packed – and on a Wednesday night!!!!!!

On Thursday several groups drove to World’s End (another description for Port Adelaide’s home ground). It is an enchanting place with gnarly old trees that could have come straight from a Harry Potter movie. Interestingly there were probably 10 or 15 caravans camped there, with just about every site having a fire pit. Toilets are provided. The roads and tracks are no problem.

There are no fees associated with camping at World’s End, and the location is hauntingly gorgeous.

Marilyn and Chris and Bernie and Peter (check please) told a tale of the Farrell Flat Hotel, which has unanimously been renamed the Feral Flat Hotel.

The unfriendly owner barman, owner of the Harley in the bar, explained in no uncertain terms that the pub had no glasses. No beer on tap. A cutlery tray that challenged you to find a clean fork. And no photos were allowed.

Happy Hour went ahead as scheduled.

Friday was another day of exploring and the old Red Ruth gaol and Girls Reformatory. They were quite serious about keeping the girls locked up as the walls were at least 20 to 25 feet high, topped by broken glass.

Happy Hour saw Don organise orders for pizzas – having “borrowed” all the menus.

Saturday morning was enlivened as we prepared to leave for Jamestown another rally arrived in Burra. It was a rally of Vintage Austin 8s. What extraordinarily beautiful cars.

Jamestown:

Saturday 18th.

Jamestown is a lovely farming and footy town and most of us arrived before the caravan check-in time of 12.30.

The Jamestown Caravan Park is in the throes of being redeveloped and so there are two areas – the OLD and the NEW.

Trevor and Audrey arrived a day earlier and were assigned the Old area because the new area was still being bulldozed.

The ground was virgin dirt and dusty but everyone managed to settle in nicely. The one common prayer was: “Hope it doesn’t rain????”

There was little chance of that as the weather continued its spectacular run (read on).

Although the caravan park was a bit of a mess with the redevelopment, it is a beautiful place and when the work is done it will be wonderful. The ablution blocks and camp kitchen area are amazing.

But it IS a farming and footy town and when Barb and Judy went to the bakery at 1.50 they were politely informed the shop was closing in 10 minutes – we assume the local football match started at 2.30.

Football played a big part in christening our club defibrillator. Well, it was almost christened.

You see the Crows were in a life and death struggle with Collingwood and the last quarter was nail-biting. Jo stopped breathing several times and we were on the verge of getting the defib when she took another gasp. Collingwood won by four points and Jo was inconsolable. No-one was game to speak to her as she was calmly discussing the umpiring of the game.

Then, would you read about it? Another footy game the next day but this time Hawthorn went down to Port by one point with a soccered off the ground goal in the final 2 seconds. Different heart attacks but several Port supporters were fighting for their turn on the defibrillator.

Happy hour began at 3 as a celebration for Gloria on her birthday, and then continued past 4. The park management has prepared a wonderful camp fire and despite the smoke, all gathered round.

Jamestown has one of the best kept secret displays we have ever seen – a joint called the Glass House, just on the edge of the town centre. It is a display of extraordinary glass – bowls, vases, paper weights, car emblems, perfume bottles – you name it. Perhaps to illustrate what’s there, we were looking at some glass car emblems – you know the Rolls Royce flying lady type. But these were made of glass and were from American cars a hundred or so years ago. The host explained that some years back two

women appeared on Antiques Road Show, each with one of these glass emblems. When it came time to get a valuation the Road Show expert told the first lady that if she sold it she could buy a brand new Rolls Royce, and have change (more than eight hundred thousand pounds); the expert told the other lady she could buy a good second-hand Rolls.

But these were by no means exceptions. The place should be heritage listed. It's \$10 per person for a personally guided two-hour tour, including tea and cakes. The owners are octogenarians Kevin and Margaret Conway. Beautiful people whose daughter is the town's GP.

Monday dinner was a barbecue provided by the club and despite the showers throughout the day, it capped an amazing stay in an amazing town.

Orroroo May 20+

Packing up in Jamestown was no hassle despite the bit of rain dampening the earthworks. And the drive to Orroroo was a breeze, on a good road, in under an hour.

About 7000 years ago some Ngadjuri people were chilling out down on Pekina Creek, just below the Orroroo Caravan Park. Like we do, they were probably having a barbecue – the blokes providing the speared kangaroo and the ladies cooking it. The kids were almost certainly climbing the superb gum trees surrounding the natural spring and maybe falling into the water.

After dinner I suspect the families relaxed on the huge stone slabs overlooking the creek, whiling away the hours as they began carving shapes and figures into the rocks. Although the exact meaning of the carvings is not known Aboriginal people are believed to be able to interpret these messages, according to their particular customs.

Those artists could not have imagined that strange, pale-faced people many, many, years later would wonder at their works and that the artwork would be protected by fences, and laws.

Orroroo is a small, friendly and clean town. The caravan park and its owner/operator family reflect the town's profile.

We once again ate at the Commercial Hotel (namesake of the Jamestown pub). The meals were agreed by all to be very good and fair priced.

Overnight the temperatures dropped below 0 degrees and in the morning the cars were covered in ice.

Orroroo is home to a massive Red Gum – *Eucalyptus Comaldulensis*. The trunk circumference is 10.89 metres and it is estimated to be around 500 years old.

Perhaps the really interesting thing about the tree is that it is commonly known as the “Widow Maker”, because those massive boughs have a habit of dropping off unexpectedly. Perhaps to prove that point the site’s picnic table has been installed well to the side of the overhanging branches.

And I guess it explains why Barb didn’t like my suggestion that it was a wonderful place for Happy Hour.

It was indeed a wonderful rally.

Julian and Brenda